(c) The suggestion was not taken up for discussion. India's position in SAARC has been that this is a contentious political issue and cannot therefore figure in SAARC deliberations.

Programmes for Amelioration of weaker sections of the Society

4419. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state :

(a) whether programmes for amelioration of weaker section of the society and eradication of poverty are proposed to be reoriented for implementation under the Eighth Five Year Plan ;

(b) if so, the details of the reorientation contemplated in respect of these programmes ; and

(c) the target, fixed for eradication of poverty ?

THE MINISTER OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI):

(a) and (b) The exercises relating to formulation of the Eighth Five Year Plan (1990-95) have just started and hence, specific details about strategy for implementation of programmes referred to in the question cannot be given.

(c) The Seventh Plan sets the target of reducing the number of persons below poverty line to 5 percent by 2000A.D.

Red Cross Personnel Killed/Injured in Sri Lanka

4420. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether some Red Cross volunteers/officers have been killed or injured in Sri Lanka in connection with the IPKF operations during the recent months ;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto including that by way of compensation to the victims or their families ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) (a) and (b) On the 4th August, 1988, a Red Cross jeep going from Kankesanturai to Mullaitivu was belown up by a landmine planted by the LTTE. The driver was killed on the spot and Mr. Gurmukh Singh and Dr. Katyal, officers of the Indian Red Cross, were seriously wounded. They were evacuated by the IPKF to a nearby hospital, where Mr. Gurmukh Singh succumbed to his injuries.

(c) Government deplores this wanton killing of Red Cross personnel on a humanitarian mission in Sri Lanka. The question of compensation is a matter which concerns the Indian Red Cross Society but Government understand that this is receiving sympathetic consideration.

Attacks on Hindus/Buddhists in Bangladesh

4421. SHRI D.B. CHANDRE GOWDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there have been large-scale attacts on the lives of Hindus and Buddhists in Bangladesh; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to discuss this issue with the Bangladesh Government ?